

§ 14-445. Defense of alcoholism.

(a) It is a defense to a charge of being intoxicated and disruptive in a public place that the defendant suffers from alcoholism.

(b) The presiding judge at the trial of a defendant charged with being intoxicated and disruptive in public shall consider the defense of alcoholism even though the defendant does not raise the defense, and may request additional information on whether the defendant is suffering from alcoholism.

(c) Whenever any person charged with committing a misdemeanor under G.S. 14-444 enters a plea to the charge, the court may, without entering a judgment, defer further proceedings for up to 15 days to determine whether the person is suffering from alcoholism.

(d) If he believes it will be of value in making his determination, the district court judge may direct an alcoholism court counselor, if available, to conduct a prehearing review of the alleged alcoholic's drinking history in order to gather additional information as to whether the defendant is suffering from alcoholism. (1977, 2nd Sess., c. 1134, s. 1; 1981, c. 519, s. 1.)